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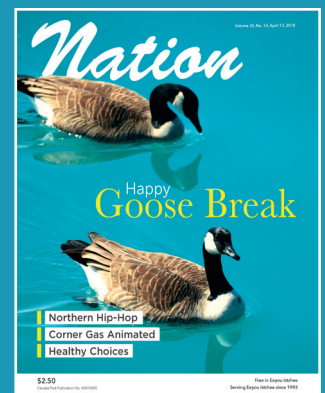


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HAPPY GOOSE BREAK



Adding insult to injury

by Will Nicholls



At least in the case of Canada's First Nations, the oldest Christian organized religion, the Catholic Church, has a hard time apologizing.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and AFN National Grand Chief Perry Bellegarde have all requested an apology from the Catholic Church for its part in Canada's residential school system. Even though the Church ran over two thirds of Canada's 133 residential schools, Pope Francis "...felt that he could not personally respond," according to the Catholic Bishops of Canada.

The Anglican, United and Presbyterian churches, which were also involved in running residential schools, have all apologized for their involvement decades ago. The only holdout to date has been the Catholic Church.

It could be tied to concerns over court cases against the church. Just in the US during the 1990s, the church paid out about \$2 billion to sexual abuse victims. If this is the concern, it makes a mockery of the Church's teachings of spirituality being more important than secular concerns.

A March 27 letter to Canada's First Nations from Bishop Lionel Gendron, the President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, said the Church sees its "relationship with Indigenous Peoples as a major pastoral priority." It is unclear exactly what is meant by "pastoral priority."

In Catholicism one can say it is understood to be in the broad sense of "helping others," and pastoral care

is the responsibility of all Christians. Pastoral care involves protecting Catholics, tending to needs, strengthening the weak, and so on. Mostly, it means getting people to join the Catholic faith.

In the letter, entitled Dear Indigenous Brothers and Sisters, Bishop Gendron wrote, "Pope Francis, in fulfilling his mission as Universal Pastor, has spoken often and passionately about the plight of Indigenous Peoples around the world and the wisdom they offer, not shying away from acknowledging those injustices that have failed to conform to the Gospel and expressing regret for past wrongs."

However, the Church hasn't even fulfilled part of a 2006 Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, made with Canada and other churches, in which it committed to raise \$25 million for residential-school survivor healing programs. At that time Ottawa let the Church off the hook during legal negotiations aimed at forcing it to pay another \$29 million it committed to as part of the agreement.

Given this intransigence, the federal NDP plans to table a motion in the House of Commons calling on Pope Francis to apologize for the abuse suffered by Indigenous children at residential schools, to meet the financial obligations promised when they signed the agreement, and to turn over documentation related to the schools they ran.

Pope Francis said the Church's mission is "to offer understanding, comfort and acceptance, rather than imposing straightaway a set of rules that only lead people to feel judged and abandoned by the very Mother called to show them God's mercy." He has also stated "the Church must accompany with attention and care the weakest of her children, who show signs of a wounded and troubled love, by restoring in them hope and confidence."

It is a shame his rhetoric is not followed by even a simple apology for the past actions of the Church he leads, much less fulfilling the obligations it agreed to under the 2006 Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.



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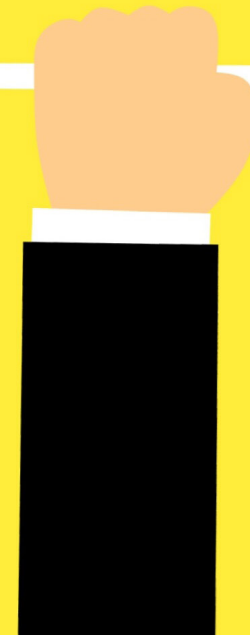
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Tossing the sugar

Reversing diabetes is possible for some but change is possible for everyone

by Amy German

This past March, in celebration of Nutrition Month, the Nation spoke with two Crees who have managed to take their health into their own hands, turning their high blood sugar around through diet and exercise.

While reversing diabetes to the point of being medication free is not possible for everyone, Kevin Neeposh and John Bosum did what many dream of doing – they gave up food that was making them ill, particularly refined sugar, and adopted a healthy lifestyle that included exercise. As long as they keep up the training and stay away from the sweet stuff, neither will have further need for diabetes treatment.

According to Neeposh, it all started in the spring of 2016 when he suddenly felt really off and went to the clinic. Neeposh said he was a big pop drinker and put so much sugar in his tea that his wife called it "syrup."

Diagnosed with dangerously high blood sugar, the doctor informed Neeposh that he was diabetic.

"My mother, sister and uncle are all diabetic and I see what they live with and how much medication they have to take. The first thing I saw was all of

the medication they needed to treat me with and it was then and there that it really hit me – this was all about how much sugar I was eating," said Neeposh.

"The doctor said that I had two options: I could take pills for the rest of my life or I could change my eating habits. So that very day I changed the way I ate and the first thing I did was quit sugar."

According to Neeposh, after cutting out sugar completely, getting sound advice from the nutritionist on what he should be eating and taking up hockey to get active, his blood sugar rapidly decreased. Eventually it got to the point where he was able to stop taking the medication. Almost two years later, Neeposh still hasn't touched a grain of refined sugar and has managed to stay off medication.

For John Bosum, being told that he had a high blood sugar count came as a shock because he had been trying to bulk up at the gym with his power lifting. Weighing in at 343 pounds at the time, he went to a clinic in Oujé-Bougoumou and was told that he was a diabetic. Wanting a second opinion,

Bosum headed to Montreal where he saw a specialist who said that his blood sugar was at 6.1 and nearing the danger zone.

Bosum started juicing, a homeopathic remedy and cut out all refined sugar from his diet as well as anything that contained flour. In addition to power lifting, Bosum took up jujitsu with his son and began competitive arm wrestling.

According to Paul Linton, a Diabetes Educator for the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay, the increase in diabetes was caused by the dramatic change in lifestyle for the Cree. They went from being very active to sedentary and from a traditional diet to consuming processed, fatty and sugary foods. For some, if they change their diet and become physically active, they could drastically improve their health. But this isn't always the case.

"Some just can't do it no matter how hard they try and living by extremes will not help them. What we recommend at the Health Board is to make small changes, but ones that you can be consistent about. Taking small steps is always easier," said Linton.



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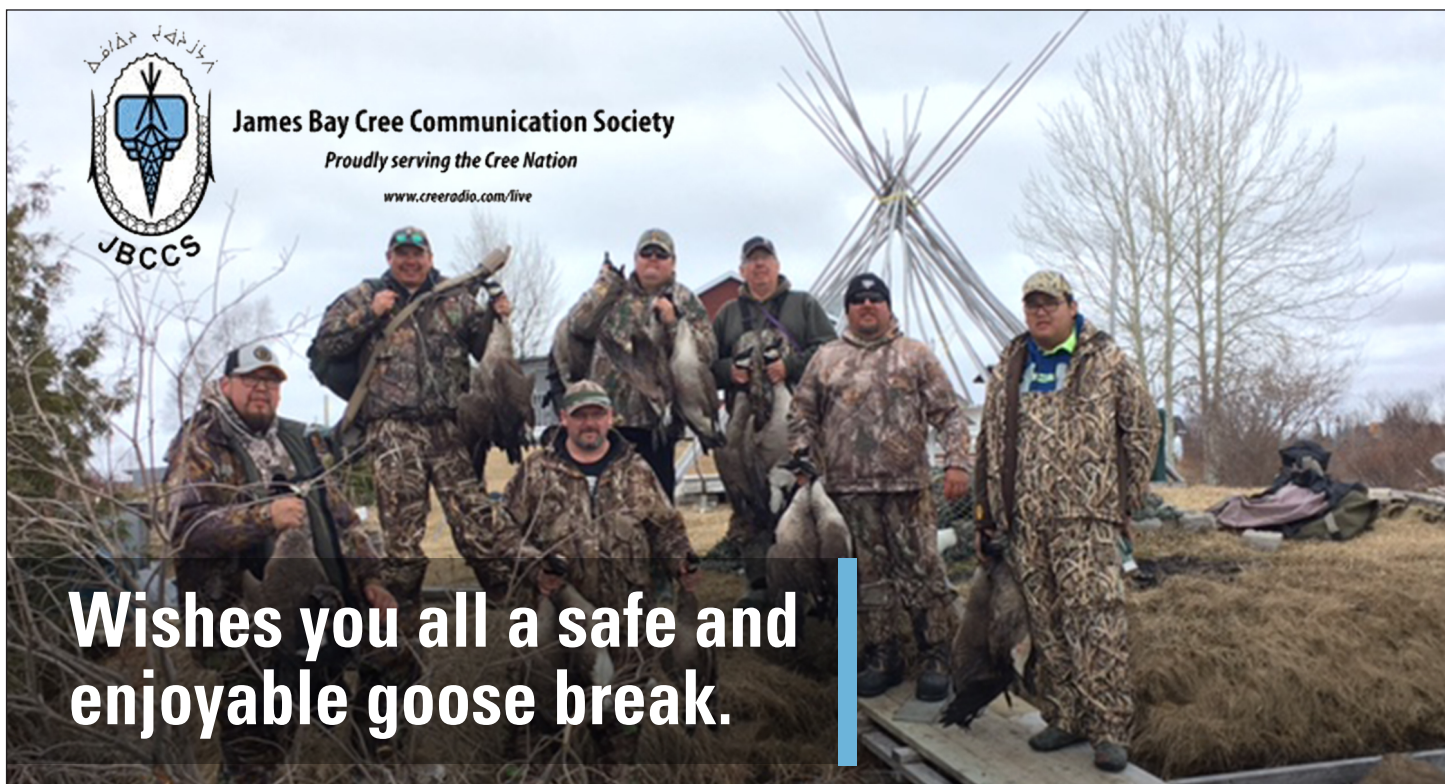
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Platinum quantity at Quality Inn

Choice Hotels Canada recently announced that Quality Inn & Suites Val-d'Or has been awarded the prestigious Platinum Hospitality Award for the sixth consecutive year.

"We are honoured to receive this esteemed award from Choice Hotels Canada," said Alexandre Audet, General Manager. "We would like to thank our dedicated staff for all their hard work and commitment to ensuring that our guests are our first priority."

Chosen from over 350 hotels across the country, the award goes to hotels based on a ranking system designed to measure customer satisfaction.

"The hotels honoured with Platinum Awards are top performers that have made guest satisfaction and service their top priority," said Brian Leon, managing director, Choice Hotels Canada. "Properties like Quality Inn & Suites Val-d'Or are clear leaders and help elevate the standards in the industry. We are so proud to recognize and celebrate this amazing hotel."



First Goose!

The Nation would like to congratulate Greg Mark-Stewart for bagging this season's first goose. And to everyone else, have a safe and healthy Goose Break. Meegwetch!

Making it official

Bill C-70 received royal assent March 29 and will take effect once the House of Commons has been so advised. The Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee Governance Agreement Act will bring into force the Cree Nation Governance Agreement between the Cree of Eeyou Istchee and the Government of Canada. Essentially, it provides the Cree of Eeyou Istchee with their own constitution, and power to amend their own laws.

"This year marks the 350th anniversary of the arrival of Europeans in Eeyou Istchee," Grand Chief Abel Bosum said to the Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples. "But, by the time they arrived,

we had already been there, as self-governing Indigenous nations, for thousands of years. [In giving royal assent] they advance reconciliation between the Cree Nation and the Government of Canada."

"Today was a very powerful day for Indigenous persons in the Senate of Canada – we passed a modern agreement that will allow the Cree to truly govern themselves by their own laws and norms," acknowledged Independent Nova Scotia Senator Daniel Christmas.

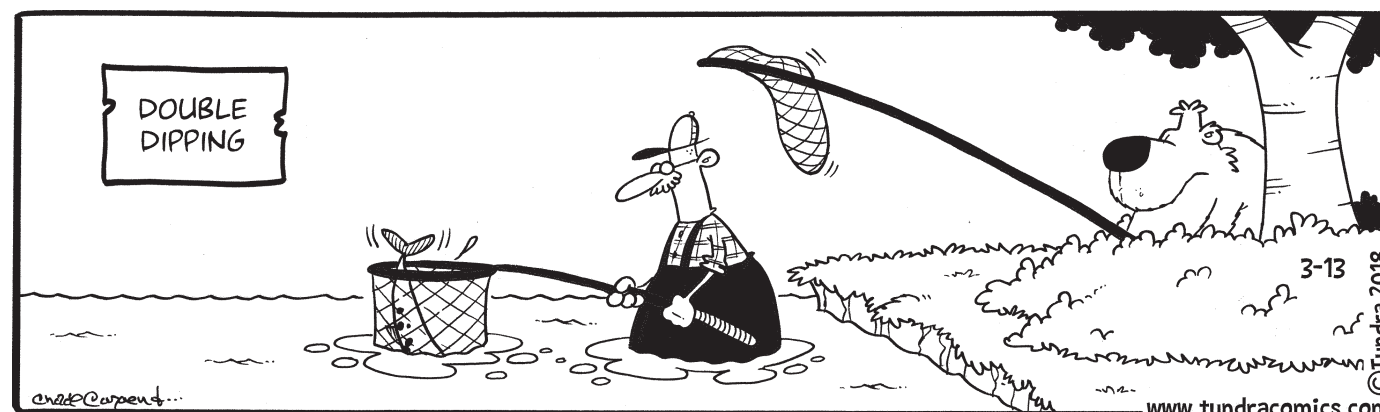
"This is truly a monumental step in Canada. I think it takes the discussion on Indigenous self-government to a whole new level in this country."

EEPF's new director

The Eeyou Eenu Police Force has a new boss. A dual committee of board/council members and a selection committee chose Mistissini's David Bergeron as EEPF Director in a unanimous decision March 28.

Bergeron brings 23 years of experience to the position after beginning his policing career in Oujé-Bougoumou in the mid-1990s. At the time of his appointment Bergeron was acting director of the EEPF since the spring of last year.

The Grand and Deputy Grand Chief both wished Bergeron luck and welcomed him to his newly elected position in a public statement.



3-13
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OPENING LEGENDS

The aura of N.W.A rubs off on members of the NorthStars and Violent Ground in Montreal

By Ben Powless | Photos by Carlos Guerra

The early hip-hop group N.W.A is one of the most influential foundations of the genre. Drawing on their experiences with racism and poverty, their music resonated with audiences who hadn't heard their lives described in such unflinching lyrical detail.

Two Indigenous hip-hop groups recently enjoyed a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity opening for N.W.A's DJ Yella and Lil' Eazy-E, the son of N.W.A frontrunner Eazy-E, at Club Le Belmont in Montreal March 29.

For the NorthStars, whose artists Gary Jolly and Elton Salt hail from Nemaska, as well as Violent Ground, made up of brothers Allan "Nomadik" and Christian "Naskapi 9" Nabinacaboo, it was an experience they couldn't have imagined growing up.

"It was pretty surreal. It was something you wouldn't think was possible for a Native from James Bay," admits Salt. "I just kept thinking – is this really happening? It was like a dream come true."

While their lives and interests may mirror each other, the members of NorthStars and Violent Ground haven't yet met, much less worked together before. Nomadik and Naskapi 9 both come from the Naskapi Nation community of Kawawachikamach, near Schefferville. Jolly said he is hopeful that both groups will work together or even tour together in the future.

Naskapi 9 says he grew up listening to his older brother's old-school hip-hop. When he was 11, his parents bought him a DJ machine that he learned to play around with, making music with friends.

Meanwhile, Nomadik, who was in Ontario for school at the time, was also developing a love for hip-hop, its flow and melody. When he returned home in 2005, he discovered his brother's mutual interest, and they began making music together.

Years later, their cousin-turned-manager Steve Einish got involved with their music, as they released their first self-titled album in 2014 and the brothers decid-





It was pretty surreal. *It was something you wouldn't think was possible for a Native from James Bay*

- Elton Salt

ed they wanted to take music more seriously.

The same year Nomadik returned home, the NorthStars' Jolly and Salt ended up performing music by former N.W.A. members at an event – and got hooked.

They launched their first single in 2012, and released their first album, *Dreams*, in 2015. They've spent the last three years touring Canada and parts of the US. With an upcoming show in the Innu community of Natuashish, NL, and past shows in BC, they will have travelled from coast to coast.

After the April 13 show, the duo will head back to the studio to produce their upcoming album for a June

release on their own record label, NorthStar Records. Currently, they're working in a walk-in closet turned recording studio, but as Nemaska finishes work on a new youth centre, the duo has been promised a brand-new studio space.

Violent Ground also claims humble roots – their production group, 91 BASE Productions, is named for their mother's basement and house number.

These four musicians also see themselves as storytellers – reflecting their experiences, and the stories of those around them, and helping educate and motivate others.

"I have a tendency when I'm in pain of writing things down. It's that pain, that emotion, that's how I make my lyrics," explains Nomadik. "It's stuff that's happened to me, to us, to my people. We want people to understand what happens to every Native in every community in North America."

They say their name is meant to reflect the violence that was brought onto Turtle Island, how lands were stolen, and how people are now a product of this violent exchange.

For Jolly, it's about showing people that there are others out there going through the same things.

"Mostly our music is about our experiences growing up, the rest is based on other people's lives, so they can see that someone feels the same as they do and let them know they're not alone."

They have also had to deal with the stage fright that comes with getting up in front of a crowd of strangers. Naskapi 9 admits he was "very shy" the first time he performed, but they kept at it.

"There's always nerves before, but it just releases when you're on stage," Nomadik says.

"For me and Elton to do a good show, you put on a persona you want to present to the people – then

you hit the switch," adds Jolly. "You're on fire, you're on point. It isn't until after you're done that the stage fright hits you now."

Both groups are adamant that young people should pursue their dreams.

"This started out as just a dream in our basement," says Nomadik. "You have to get out of your comfort zone and move forward in life. Don't care about the people doubting you."

Don't be afraid to fail, says Salt: "Fail many times if you have to. The point is you try."

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Corner Gas

RE-ANIMATED



Lorne Cardinal reflects on the iconic Canadian TV series and its new life as a cartoon

by Dan Isaac

Although it's an entirely new format, getting back into character David Quinton was like putting on his "favourite old shirt," said Plains Cree actor Lorne Cardinal.

For 10 years Cardinal played the local police sergeant in the fictional

town of Dog River on the CTV comedy series *Corner Gas*.

Now, after a four-year hiatus following a six-season run that included 107 live-action episodes and a feature-length film, the cast will be reprising their roles — as the voices of cartoon characters.

While the original series became a national favourite with Canadian audiences, Cardinal never expected the show to get a third act.

"After we finished filming the movie, I thought that was it," lamented Cardinal. "It was a very sad time because when

you film a show like that, the cast and crew become your family. When the band has to break up, so to speak, you get a lull of depression but something else comes up and you move on. That's what acting is all about – the next challenge."

After the movie, Cardinal went on to act in numerous TV series, including FX's hit drama Fargo. He even wrote and co-directed a documentary, called Chasing Lear, which followed August Schellenberg's 40-year-dream of an all-Native King Lear hitting the main stage of the National Arts Centre.

The challenge now is voice acting in an old role. For the animated version of the series, half the cast records in Toronto while the other half recites lines in a Vancouver sound studio.

"It takes a bit of getting used to," said Cardinal. "You have to rely more on diction to emphasise the beats. It's funny because I find I'm still acting physically even though no one sees my body or face."

He also doesn't have his partner to play off. Tara Spencer-Nairn, a.k.a. Constable Karen Pelly, is part of the cast's Toronto contingent while Cardinal's in Vancouver.

Cardinal is also anxious about how the new show will play with younger audiences. "The episodes are all at least as funny as the live series and I'm hoping it will attract a new, younger generation of Corner-Gas-heads while satisfying the stalwart fans."

It's all about the fans, continued Cardinal.

"Without them we wouldn't have done a movie or an animated series. I'm honoured that our fans love the characters that we created and that they still resonate with our audience."

He applauded the writers for pushing the limits with the show's new format. While the familiar rhythm of small-town humour is captured in the new medium, the show can now boldly go where it's never gone before.

"Since we're not concerned about the cost of building sets or how it will look playing out in real-life, the writers can push it a lot further," Cardinal observed. "If we want to, we could do Corner Gas in Space."

They don't – yet – go to space, but they do imagine a dystopic Dog-River-future in homage to Mad Max: Fury Road. They then flash to a Sasquatch fighting a unicorn to death in the next episode so... "We do a lot of strange things with this one," chuckled Cardinal.

Corner Gas Animated premiered April 2 and Cardinal was ecstatic to be joining the ranks of the Lone Ranger's Tonto, G.I. Joe's Spirit Iron-Knife, and King of the Hill's John Redcorn as one of the few animated First Nations characters to be featured on a North American television network (excluding APTN).

The series airs every Monday at 8 pm on the Comedy Network. "Now I'll be thin and pretty forever," joked Cardinal.



"Since we're not concerned about the cost of building sets or how it will look playing out in real-life, the writers can push it a lot further. If we want to, we could do Corner Gas in space"

— Lorne Cardinal

Team Salt Shows Grit

Two brothers from Eeyou Istchee make history

by Dan Coyle

Two brothers from Eeyou Istchee made history last month as the first Cree competitors to take part in Cain's Quest, the world's toughest and longest snowmobile endurance race. Starting and finishing biennially in Labrador City, Cain's Quest takes participants on a five-day trek across 3200 kilometres of Labrador's toughest terrain, making it a race only for the most fearless of snowmobile riders.



The Salt Brothers after completing Cain's Quest

The daunting nature of Cain's Quest was a big part of the appeal for Team Salt, which is made up of brothers Dylan and Glen Salt of Chisasibi.

The brothers established Team Salt in 2016, and have been fixtures on the Eeyou Istchee snowmobile racing circuit ever since. This year's early races served as valuable preparation for the Salt brothers' Labrador adventure.

While Team Salt failed to reach the podium, they didn't disappoint in the first running of the Chisasibi Snowmobile Challenge in mid-February, finishing fourth in a field of 15 with a combined time of 28:21:06 to take home a \$5000 prize.

Cain's Quest takes participants on a five-day trek across 3200 kilometres of Labrador's toughest terrain

The Salt brothers also enjoyed considerable support from both family and the Cree community ahead of their trip to Labrador City. Numerous raffles were held in support of Dylan and Glen's

costly investment in their Cain's Quest dream, while additional unsolicited donations further helped get the brothers on the road.

However, offers of support were not limited to family and friends. An impressive 7:59:17 run in the final day of racing in Chisasibi in February sealed a second-place finish for Team Skyhawks, earning drivers Brian Rupert, Sean Langer and William Chakapash a \$20,000 cash prize.

Aware of Team Salt's plans, and impressed with their performance in Chisasibi, the Skyhawks contributed \$2000 of their prize money to Team Salt's Cain's Quest fund.

A record 41 two-man teams left the starting line in Labrador City at this year's edition of Cain's Quest, but just 17 managed to reach the finish line, including Team Salt, in 16th place.

A record 41 two-man teams left the starting line in Labrador City at this year's edition of Cain's Quest, but **just 17 managed to reach the finish line**

Closer to home, the Eeyou Istchee competitive snowmobile season continued in earnest last month, with part two of the Chisasibi Cross Country Snowmobile Challenge, followed by the Oujé-Bougoumou Snowmobile Challenge on the final weekend of March.

Mistissini's Patrick Coon proved to be a model of consistency in the Men's Sport category at this year's two-day cross-country event in Chisasibi, following up a 3:13:31 run on Day One with a 3:13:27 performance on Day Two to eke out a narrow four-minute victory over second-place Jimmy-James Neeposh.

Jeremiah Capassit of Oujé-Bougoumou led all competitors in the Men's Open category in Chisasibi, powering to a combined two-day time of 7:17:30, over 26 minutes ahead of second-place finisher Kenny Gunner of Mistissini, while Danny Gunner rounded out the podium with a time of 8:06:17.

Capassit continued his torrid pace at the Oujé-Bougoumou Snowmobile Challenge, completing the Pro Open race in 5:49:56, but that was not good enough to stop Chibougamau's Silas

Neeposh, who took the checkered flag in an impressive 5:43:27.

The Men's Pro Open was marred by a serious accident on the final day of the event, when Sebastian Neeposh of Misstisini lost control of his sled while leading the race, causing a collision with rival rider Elijah Matoush.

According to Cree Impact Media, which provides extensive coverage of the Eeyou Istchee snowmobile racing circuit on their Facebook page, Neeposh was rushed to the Montreal General Hospital, where he underwent surgery on a badly broken femur. He is reportedly on the mend, in good spirits, and eager to get back on the trails next season.

A late addition to this year's race schedule will see the 2018 snowmobile season close on the weekend of April 7-8 with cross-country snowmobile action in Waswanipi. With the event being put together on short notice, the Men's Pro and Men's Sport categories will feature smaller fields of competitors. However, both Silas Neeposh and Capassit are expected to participate.



Let us keep our traditional and cultural values **alive and strong.**

Be safe, have a successful Goose Break and enjoy your harvest this spring with families and friends.



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 Une mine de ressources

Brunswick House honoured at ROM

Brunswick House First Nation celebrated the inclusion of a collection of birch bark containers and model canoes at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) in Toronto March 13. The 16 containers and two canoes were hand made in the 1940s and 1950s by Joseph and Clara Candassie, Ojibway members of the community, located near Chapleau, Ontario.

The birch bark items are designated as having "outstanding significance and of national importance" by the government of Canada. Susan Harvie, of Ravenna, Ontario, donated them to the museum.

"I am so happy and excited that more than a hundred people from our First Nation are here today to honour the memory of our ancestors and their way of life," said Brunswick House Chief Lisa Vanbuskirk.

Harvie said she made the donation because it was the best way to preserve and protect the artifacts.

"These pieces represent part of the history of Brunswick House First Nation. Most important is that Brunswick House stays part of the story. If these items just went from my mother to me and then to the ROM, then they would be just baskets. However, with the stories of Brunswick House they become very special," explained Harvie.

"This all started when Susan approached the community a couple of years ago," said Brunswick House Band Manager Lorraine Tangie. "And thanks to the

work of so many of our leadership, Elders and community members, we are here today with our children and grandchildren to see these historic artifacts at the Royal Ontario Museum. I almost cried this morning as I was filled with so much emotion and happiness to see our people honoured."

ROM Curator Emeritus
Trudy Nicks helped present
the Candassie collection.

"Susan Harvie brought the collection to us with the support of the First Nation," said Nicks. "All of the pieces had to go through a lengthy process and it emerged that they were of historic significance to northern Ontario and Brunswick House First Nation. The long-term goal of acquiring this collection is to show these items and tell the stories associated with them."

Dozens of Brunswick House FN children donned gloves to handle the birch bark containers.

"It's great to be here today because this is special for our community. I am here with everyone to see what our ancestors did a long time ago," said 15-year-old Jacy Jolivet.



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Have a happy and prosperous Goose Break!

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A safe and happy Goose Break to all!



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Racing the storm

by Sonny Orr

My phone alarm wakes me slowly and my morning starts. It's up and about with a cup of coffee, packing bags and getting ready to head home. We're in North Bay and the weather has been great. My phone rattles again and a red light blinks to catch my attention. It's a weather warning, and I'm thinking – tornados? I quickly tap my way through all the ads and get to the bottom of this dire warning. Uh oh, it's a snow warning.

Dang! I think to myself, I'll have to leave earlier than planned. The packing mode speeds up and I head out to warm up the little rented car. Oh no, it's covered in snow! Heck, I guess I'll leave even earlier. The snow gets cleared off and I head out to take my student daughter to her morning class at the college.

My GPS is talking me back to my daughter's apartment and we prepare for the trip home. My phone rattles again, warning me of the impending storm. We're off – me, my better half and my granddaughter. We're all safely buckled in and the new vehicle tracking, lane veering and radar is on with the cruise set at a safe 80 klicks an hour.

I'm glad that we stopped off for some coffee as the road passes slowly

by. Thank God for the occasional heavy truck trailer to stir my auto drive into a lower gear and gently nudge me awake. Finally, we hit Quebec and the race is on to outrun the dark clouds looming behind us. Actually, they were darkish grey and flaccid looking, nothing like the pending tempest we had been warned about.

Brazenly, I hit 96 kms per hour and keep my wary eye on the weather behind us. For some reason, the sun was out and shining quite brightly. I put on my camo sunglasses and the scenery is quite nice. We reach our destination with a quick stopover at a roadside dépanneur to buy a few cartons of tax-free smokes and thank the Great Spirit that taxes were not part of the great agenda. We check into our hotel room and head off to the Asian buffet for some much-needed fuel.

I check Facebook to see what's up and notice the many comments of other travelers' woes dealing with freezing rain, slush, whiteouts and zero visibility. I look out the window of the eatery and note nice weather with no indication of a storm. Sated with culinary delights, we head back to the room and ready ourselves for the next day of travel, the flight home.

The next morning my phone twinkles me awake with another storm warning. Isn't April fool's over by now? The complimentary continental breakfast perks me up and I head out to warm up the car. Again, as the night before, it's covered with about six inches of white stuff. But the sun shines so brightly, making it another pleasant day.

After checking in, I return to social media to see if all the warnings have debated. Again, Facebook posts brim with stories and pictures of terrible weather. No driving conditions are considered safe, and I wonder if the plane will make it. The sun shines on as we lift off and sail smoothly to our home. It's a beautiful day and I thank Mother Nature for this and curse the meteorologist who first uttered the term Polar Vortex.

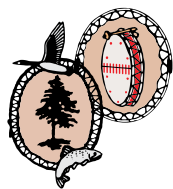
We land and head home in my old beat-up truck. The weather is glorious. At home, I watch the news reports of all the bad weather conditions pummeling the southerners. Some schools are closed, and there are massive vehicle pileups. There are even a few tornados, I note.

Oh well, some days aren't meant to be exciting I guess.



by Xavier Kataquapit

Perhaps this phenomenon is one reason politics has gotten so bizarre and scary over the past few years. Hitler's propaganda machine was built on telling the big lie and repeating it often with domination of media so that the general population would end up believing it. Much of what I am being bombarded with these days on the internet and even in traditional media seems to be intent on moving our society away from democracy and towards a fascist-like environment. That scares me and it should frighten you too.



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